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TITLE OF THE INVENTION

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ROYAL GAME AND METHOD OF PLAYING

This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application
Serial No. 60/409,586 of Thomas E. Sawyer filed September 11, 2002, titled
10 ROYAL GAME AND METHOD OF PLAYING. The entirety of that provisional
application is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

15 This invention relates to a game, and in particular to a casino-style game played
with at least one standard deck of cards, the game being played in accordance with the
rules of Poker.

Background of the Technology

20 It is known in the art to provide card games, such as Poker, in a casino
environment or consistent with casino style rules. In these games, the gaming
establishment typically seeks to attract as many participants to a game as possible to
increase the money collected at the gaming table. In addition, the number of games
played during a specified time, such as the number of hands per hour, is also an important
25 metric used to evaluate the return potential for a game. That is, the more hands that are
played during a unit of time, the greater the money collected by the house and the
corresponding profit realized.

There is a need for card games having improved play over standard Poker to attract and maintain customer participation. There is a further need for such games that include features, such as additional side betting and special rules of play, to maintain player interest and play after initial dealing of the hand.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method and system for playing a casino style card game, referred to in one embodiment as "The Royal Game," that includes a portion of the game played in conjunction with standard rules for Poker, as described, for example, in John Scarne, "Scarne's Encyclopedia of Games" (1994), including rules for play of Five Card Stud, Five Card Draw, and Seven Card Stud, using a shoe of one or more decks of cards or representations thereof. The game may be played, for example, on a gaming table by players and a dealer using standard cards or, for example, on a terminal, such as a computer or other electronic medium, using representations of various features of the game, which are viewed or otherwise provided to each player, such as via a display device using a graphical user interface (GUI). The terminal can include, for example, a personal computer, minicomputer, microcomputer, or mainframe computer or other device having a processor and a display or coupling to a display, such as an electronic hand-held game device or a personal digital assistant. The game is also playable in electronic form or in conjunction with electronic features over a network, such as the Internet, or using other gaming devices, such as slot machines.

In conjunction with play of Poker during the Poker portion of the game, including standard rules for wagering during play (e.g., placing ante bets and wagers during the course of play), for each hand, prior to dealing any cards, the game of the present invention provides for the optional placement of a selection, including wager, by each player to participate in an auxiliary game (referred to in one embodiment as the "The Royal" side game). Upon a hand that includes four "royal" cards (i.e., four face cards (10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace)) of the same suit (e.g., hearts, diamonds, clubs, spades) being dealt to a player selecting to play the auxiliary game, that player receives a bonus return or

is eligible to participate in a bonus event. For example, upon receiving four royal cards of the same suit, the player receives a selected bonus prize or participates in a random selection of a bonus prize. In one embodiment of an electronic version of the present invention, the bonus prize is randomly selected.

5 In addition to the auxiliary game, an embodiment of the present invention includes use of a payout table or other pay scale for returns on wagers in the Poker portion of the game. In one embodiment of the present invention, the player is able to place one or more wagers during play of the Poker portion of the game.

 For example, in one embodiment in which play of the Poker portion of the game is
10 in accordance with rules for Five Card Stud, play occurs as follows. Each player has options, selectable such as via a selection button or buttons for electronic or slot machine games or wager locations for game table versions of the game, to participate in the Poker game portion (e.g., by placement of an ante in an ante location) and to participate in the auxiliary game (e.g., by placement of an auxiliary game ante in the auxiliary game bet
15 location). In an embodiment of the present invention, each player may select to participate in the auxiliary game only if that player has selected to participate in the Poker portion of the game.

 In one variation of the Poker portion of the game, each player is dealt two cards down and one card up, in accordance with the rules of Five Card Stud. Each player then
20 selects to place a first wager (e.g., by placing the wager in a first betting location) or to fold. In an embodiment of the present invention, the minimum first wager is equal to the Poker game portion ante amount. Following placement of all first wagers or folding, for each player placing a wager, a second face up card is dealt. Each player then selects to place a second wager (e.g., by placing the wager in a second betting location) or to fold.

Following placement of all second wagers or folding, each player is dealt a final card, either face up or face down, depending on house rules. Optionally, in accordance with some house rules, players may also select to trade received cards for newly dealt cards or optionally to pass on betting a second wager, but to elect to remain in the game.

5 Following dealing of all hands, the hands of each player remaining in the game are revealed, and all wager payouts for the Poker portion of the game are determined. For example, players having hands listed on a payout table are paid returns on their wagers based on the payout table returns indicated (e.g., players having three of a kind receive 2:1
10 returns on wagers if so indicated in the payout table) or, for example, receiving no return and forfeiting their wagers, including the Poker ante, for hands not meeting minimum qualifications for payout table returns. In other embodiments of the present invention, other returns are usable in addition to those obtained via a pay table, such as by providing returns for winning hands upon comparing hands among players or upon comparing each
15 player's hand to a dealer's hand. In addition, the hands of all players remaining in the game and participating in the auxiliary game are evaluated with regard to the auxiliary game. For example, all players having four "royal" cards receive the bonus prize or are
20 allowed to participate in a random bonus prize selection event (e.g., turn of a prize wheel).

Additional advantages and novel features of the invention set forth in part in the description that follows, considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawing
20 figures, will become more apparent to those skilled in the art upon examination of the following or upon learning by practice of the invention. It is to be understood, however, that the drawings are designed solely for the purposes of illustration and not as a definition of the limits of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is an overhead view of the players, dealer, and gaming table for play of the game in accordance one embodiment of the present invention;

5 FIG. 2 presents a gaming table layout for a gaming table in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3 depicts the components for electronic play of the game in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4 presents components for electronic play of the game using a network in
10 accordance with another embodiment of the present invention; and

FIGs. 5-7 show a flow diagram of an example method of play in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

15 An embodiment of the present invention includes two portions that make up the overall game. The first portion of the game, referred to as the Poker game portion, is played in accordance with the rules of Poker, and the game portion is referred to as the auxiliary game portion.

20 In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, play is conducted using one or more standard sets of 52 playing cards having values of Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen, and King. The game may be optionally played with the Ace as the high or low card, or as optionally selectable as high or low by each player and using one or more Jokers, as, for example, wild cards. Each participating player is seated at, for example, a playing table, as described further below, on the players' side of the table. The

dealer is located on the dealer's side of the table, opposite the players. In one embodiment, the table is curved, having a convex side and an opening for the dealer, so that the dealer is easily able to deal to each player from the dealer opening in the table, and up to seven players are easily and comfortably accommodated on the convex side of the table.

The game may also be played with representations of any of the features described. For example, the game is playable in an electronic or partially electronic manner using a terminal, such as a personal computer, microcomputer, minicomputer, mainframe computer, or other device having a processor and display or other device for communicating information to a player, such as an electronic hand-held game device, for which representative images of cards are displayable on a screen via a GUI. The game is also playable in conjunction with performance of selected functions on a network, such as the Internet or an intranet.

The game table used in conjunction with an embodiment of the present invention is a standard blackjack or poker sized casino table, in which a dealer occupies one side of the table and players occupy the other. In one embodiment, the table includes a bar located on the dealer's side of the table. The table also includes the name of the game, such as "The Royal Game."

From the player's side, below the name (toward the players), are player positions for up to seven player spots. At each player's position are four betting spots or areas, one of which is for a Poker game portion ante, one for the auxiliary (Royal) game portion ante, and the other two for first and second bets. At these betting spots, players place chips, for example, for betting as play of the game proceeds. In an embodiment of the present invention, the Poker ante spot is used to indicate selection to play in the game, the

auxiliary ante spot is used as an ante bet spot for election to play in the auxiliary game portion, and the two other spots are used for additional betting with respect to the Poker portion of the game.

5 In an embodiment of the present invention, marked lines are included on the table to clearly delineate each player's position from an adjacent player or players. The clear separation of each player position by the lines serves a number of functions, including preventing cheating, by clearly indicating the area in which a player's money or chips are located.

10 References will now be made in detail to embodiments of the present invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 is an overhead view of the players, dealer, and gaming table for play of the game in accordance one embodiment of the present invention. FIG. 1 shows an embodiment of the game as played with one to seven players 1, 2, 3, 4 and a dealer 5 at a gaming table 7 using one or more decks of cards located at a card location 9.

15 FIG. 2 presents a gaming table layout for a gaming table in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention for play by players and a dealer at a gaming table. As shown in FIG. 2, the table 7 includes a deck placement area 9 on the dealer side of the table 10 and seven player areas 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 on the players' side of the table, opposite the dealer side 10. Each player area 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 includes four
20 marked areas, a Poker ante spot 20 for placement of a Poker game ante, an auxiliary game ante spot 21, and two betting spots 22, 23.

FIG. 3 depicts the components for electronic play of the game in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. As shown in FIG. 3, in this embodiment, the player 1 plays at a terminal 30, such as a personal computer, a minicomputer, a

microcomputer, a main frame computer, or other device having a display, processor, and GUI, including a hand-held electronic game, a personal digital assistant, or a slot machine.

FIG. 4 presents components for electronic play of the game using a network, such as the Internet or an intranet, in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention. As shown in FIG. 4, a player 1 plays at a terminal 40, such as a personal computer, a minicomputer, a microcomputer, a main frame computer, or other device having a display and processor. The terminal 40, is connected 41, 42 via, for example, wire, wireless, or fiberoptic coupling to a network 43, such as the Internet or an intranet, to a server 45, such as personal computer, a minicomputer, a microcomputer, a main frame computer, or other device having a processor, and optionally including a repository, such as a database, or connection to a database.

FIGS. 5-7 show a flow diagram of an example method of play for an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, in which play of the Poker portion of the game is in accordance with rules for Five Card Stud. As shown in FIG. 5, each player elects whether to play in the Poker portion of the game 50, such as by placing a Poker ante, and whether to play in the auxiliary game 51, such as by placing an auxiliary game ante. Each participating player is then dealt two cards down and one card up 52, for example, in accordance with the rules of Five Card Stud. Each player selects to place a first wager (e.g., by placing the wager in a first betting location) or to fold 53. In an embodiment of the present invention, the minimum first wager is equal to the Poker game portion ante amount.

Following placement of all first wagers or folding, for each player folding 54, both antes are forfeited and the player is out of the game 55. For each player placing a wager 54, a second face up card is dealt 54 (fourth overall card dealt to player). Each player then

selects whether to place a second wager (e.g., by placing the wager in a second betting location) or to fold 55. Following placement of all second wagers or folding, each player folding forfeits both antes and the first bet and is out of the game 57. Each player placing a second wager 56 is dealt a final card 58, either face up or face down, depending on

5 house rules. Optionally, in accordance with some house rules, players may also select to trade one or more received cards for newly dealt cards or optionally to pass on betting a second wager, but to elect to remain in the game.

Following dealing of all hands, the hands of each player remaining in the game are revealed, and all wager payouts for the Poker portion of the game are determined 59. For

10 example, players having hands listed on a payout table are paid returns on their wagers based on the payout table returns indicated (e.g., players having three of a kind receive 2:1 returns on wagers if so indicated in the payout table). Other returns are usable with the present invention, in addition to returns via a pay table, such as by comparing hands among players or by comparing each player's hand to a dealer's hand. In addition, the

15 hands of all players remaining in the game and participating in the auxiliary game are evaluated with regard to the auxiliary game 60. All players not having the appropriate "royal" cards in their hands lose their auxiliary game ante. All players having the appropriate "royal" cards in their hands receive the bonus prize or are allowed to participate in a random bonus prize selection event 63 (e.g., turn of a prize wheel).

20 Example embodiments of the present invention have now been described in accordance with the above advantages. It will be appreciated that these examples are merely illustrative of the invention. Many variations and modifications will be apparent to those skilled in the art.